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ABSTRACT

The program of the Japan-American Institute of Management Sciences (JAIMS) in Hawaii, a nonprofit graduate-level institution intended to support training for cross-cultural business leadership, is described and discussed. Two curricula, the Japan-focused Master of Business Administration program and the Japan-focused Management Program are offered cooperatively with the University of Hawaii. The JAIMS program goal is both to teach and expand linguistic skills and to train students to behave appropriately in a Japanese social context. A distinction is made between the underlying cultural rules of the society and the rules of etiquette, protocol, and ritual that are their surface manifestation. It is noted that realization of the importance of developing Japanese social intuition emerged from cross-cultural student-teacher conflicts in classes. As a result, specific attention is given in class to these intrinsic Japanese expectations and values: humility; indirectness; in-group/out-group consciousness; vertical relationships; distance/reservation; reciprocity/indebtedness; orderliness/neatness; and consideration/initiative. Examples are given of classroom techniques that highlight these values. It is concluded that instilling social intuition in Japan-bound students is crucial to their success. (MSE)

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Developing Native Social Intuition in Preparation for an Internship in Japan

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Running Head: INTERNSHIP IN JAPAN: DEVELOPING SOCIAL INTUITION

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Abstract

The development of `social intuition' in the language classroom is crucial for a successful internship in Japan. `Social intuition' refers to knowledge of the underlying culture-specific rules: the implicit values, attitudes and expectations of a society, and the ability to apply them intuitively from situation to situation as they affect language and behavior. To explicitly develop Japanese social intuition, it is necessary to create a classroom environment in which the expectations and requirements mirror those of the target culture, and to monitor, not only a students linguistic production, but also the appropriateness of their behavior.

Introduction

50 U.S. educated business people were asked to rank in order of importance the things they felt should be included in a training program designed to prepare non-Japanese for doing business in Japan (Frankenstein and Hosseini, 1988). Japanese language was ranked as the single most important item on a training agenda. The ability to communicate and operate in the Japanese cultural context was listed as the second most important training topic. It would seem from this that a Japanese language curriculum designed specifically to train international managers/executives addresses both issues.

The Japan-America Institute of Management Science(JAIMS) was established by Fujitsu Limited in 1972 as a non-profit graduate level institution. The campus is located in Honolulu with a JAIMS Japan Office (JJO), located in Tokyo. JAIMS seeks to help individuals become more effective as leaders and managers in cross-cultural business settings. Japanese language training is an integral part of the Japan-focused Executive Master of Business Administration (JEMBA) and the Japan-focused Management Program (JMP)offered cooperatively by JAIMS and the College of Business Administration at the University of Hawaii. The JEMBA program is an intensive 15-month curriculum which includes traditional MBA courses, 225 hours of Japanese language training, culture courses, and a three-month internship with a major corporation in Japan. The JMP is a 10-month certificate program designed for individual who have significant academic business study and who are interested in working with the Japanese.

At JAIMS the goal of our language program is to provide language

training outside Japan that will prepare our students for an in-country internship. Our curriculum has developed over the years; and emphasis, focus and content are based on feedback from former students and internship companies. However, the ultimate goal of our program is not only teaching and/or expanding existing linguistic skills, but, also, in the limited time given, to train our students to behave appropriately in a Japanese social context.

Japanese Social Intuition

For an in-country internship, there is no doubt that language proficiency is crucial. Success in the internship and success in the job market increasingly demand a higher level of proficiency in Japanese. However, as important, if not more so, is a sensitivity to the cultural values, social expectations and unspoken rules that govern the behavior of a given society. Jose De La Torre (in DeWoskin, 1991) stressed this in his opening remarks at the 1st Conference on Language and Culture in Professional Schools. He stated that, in formulating goals of the language component in a business school curriculum, high proficiency might be secondary to the achievement of cultural awareness. Jan Bardsley (1991) in a paper presented at the Association for Teachers of Japanese also recognizes the importance of custom, attitude and appropriate behavior. She stated that "One cannot attempt to circumvent or ignore Japanese custom and attitude which goes against the grain, but rather one must attempt to assume appropriate behavior and attitude when speaking."

All socialized members of a society share a set of rules and interact accordingly. A successful member of a given society can go into a given social situation, know what to say, understand what is being said, and know how to behave without offending. He/she possesses `social intuition'. In this paper, `social intuition' refers to knowledge of the underlying culture-specific rules: the implicit values, attitudes and expectations of a society, and the ability to apply them intuitively from situation to situation. Social intuition affects behavior; it also affects language. It is acquired in the same way a native language is acquired. It is explicitly taught by parent to child in the socialization process and reinforced by the actions of the rest of society and the education system.

It is important to differentiate these underlying cultural rules of a society from rules of etiquette, protocol and ritual. Rules of etiquette, protocol and ritual are the surface manifestation of the underlying attitudes, values and expectations of a culture. They are the rules one finds in etiquette books. They are explicit, easy to delineate, applied consciously; and they directly govern behavior and language. Japanese society is regulated to a great extent by explicit rules of etiquette, protocol and ritual. To remove shoes when entering a Japanese house, to sit nearest the door and away from the alcove of honor; before eating to say,"itadakimasu"; these are but a few examples.

The realization of the importance of developing Japanese social intuition in our students came, over time, as a result of teacher/student conflicts that occurred in our classes. The students

that participate in the JEMBA/ JMP program come from many different language and cultural backgrounds. It is quite common to have a novice class of eight to ten students in which each student is from a different country. This cultural mix offers a challenge because of the different learning styles and expectations that the students bring from their diverse native languages and cultural backgrounds. However, we often noticed that students coming from Asian countries seemed to be able to naturally intuit appropriate behavior and speech strategies in a Japanese setting more readily than non-Asian students. An Indonesian student, for example, would never dream of calling his/her instructor by first name; and an Indonesian's response to a compliment is much like that of a Japanese: self-depreciation. On the other hand, students, who accidentally offended or irritated native Japanese instructors or staff members from Japan, did so because they came from a society where expectations and values differed from those of Japanese society: the proverbial East-meets-West dilemma. When a teacher comes from one culture and the students from another, communication problems are to be expected. When a teacher comes from one culture and the students from many different cultures, the problems primarily involve the students that come from cultures that are in opposition with that of the teacher.

Hofstede(1986) uses a four-dimensional model to describe what he calls ` cultural dimensions' and how these differences are manifested in classroom behavior and learning styles:

1. Individualist Vs. Collectivist
2. Power Distance

3. Uncertainty Avoidance

4. Feminine/Masculine

The conflict between `individualist vs. collectivist' and ` small power distance vs. large power distance' represent the two dimensions where the greatest conflict seems to arise in the Japanese language classroom. Hofstede gives a comprehensive description of interactional differences for each dimension; however, for the sake of brevity, only the specific interactional differences that appear to affect the Japanese language class environment and student-teacher rapport are given here. Based on Hofstede's description of the four cultural dimensions, Japanese society can be described as being collectivist with a large power distance. In a collectivist society, individuals speak up in class when called upon by the teacher, neither the teacher nor the student should ever be made to lose face. On the other hand, in individualist societies, confrontation is acceptable and face consciousness is weak. In societies with a large power distance dimension, a teacher merits the respect of his/her students; the teacher is never contradicted nor publicly criticized, respect for teacher is also shown outside of class. In light of this analysis of cultural dimensions, it is no wonder that students who were overly familiar, slouched in their seats, put feet on the table, debated grammar points and/or questioned the expertise of the teacher, complained, or made demands, tended to irritate and or/ be disliked by their Japanese instructors.

Hofstede (1986)'s analysis explains factors which affect the teacher/student conflicts that may occur in a Japanese language

classroom; however, collectivism and a large power distance dimension alone do not account for all the verbal and nonverbal behavior that one observes in Japanese society. I suggest here a more comprehensive list of the values and expectations intrinsic to Japanese society which affect behavior and language. Consider:

1. Humility(kenson)
2. Indirectness(aimai-sa)
3. In-group/Out-group (uchi/soto)

   Collectivism
4. Vertical relationships(jooge kankei)

   Power Distance
5. Distance/Reservation (enryo)
6. Reciprocity/Indebtedness (on o ukeru/kaesu)
7. Orderliness/Neatness(seiriseiton)
8. Consideration/Initiative (ki ga kiku/ki ga tsuku)

This list is not intended as definitive. A cultural anthropologist or sociologist would probably be able to add a number of additional factors which have been overlooked. The list is offered only as a point of departure for discussion, and was compiled in an attempt to delineate the underlying cultural standards by which the appropriateness of actual student behavior was judged by Japanese instructors and staff. In these terms, behavior judged as inappropriate would indicate a lack of social intuition: ignorance of these underlying values and expectations and/or negative transfer from a student's native culture. In a typical Japanese language classroom, the underlying values and expections of Japanese society are dealt

with in a hit-or-miss fashion. When an underlying cultural standard impinges on language production, language instructors may explain the standard or value in the classroom. However, when only behavior is affected, the attitude/value is often not addressed; and more often than not, behavior in the classroom which would be considered unacceptable in Japan is allowed.

The value placed on humility(kenson), indirectness(aimai-sa) and in-group/out-group(uchi/soto) consciousness directly affects language use. The importance of exhibiting humility may not be explained in so many words; however, a language teacher will probably give students speech strategies which imply the value of humility. An instructor might say that if you are complimented, the natural response in Japanese is self-depreciation. In Japanese, the following exchange:

A: What a beautiful shirt!

B: Oh, thank you. Isn't it great! I just love it!

is unnatural. A more natural response would be something like the following:

A: This? It was a gift/It's old/ It was on sale.

Do you really think so?

Similarly, indirectness/vagueness is also often dealt with in the language classroom. If someone asks if you are busy, the natural response is not,"Yes, I am." At the same time, one cannot begin to teach the use of honorific forms and terms of reference and address without a discussion of in-group/out-group relationships.

Consciousness of vertical relationships(jooge kankei), the value of maintaining distance/reservation(enryo), and sense of

reciprocity/indebtedness(On o ukeru/kaesu) are three deep rooted values of Japanese society which affect language and behavior. In the language classroom, the introduction of terms of address, honorific forms, and donatary verbs can not occur without some discussion of vertical relationships. Distance/reservation or the lack thereof is observed in the unnaturalness of the following exchange:

A: Kono puresento o doozo

(Please accept this present.)

B: Doomo arigatoo gozaimasu

(Thank you.)

A little hesitation on the part of the receiver and humility on the part of the giver would make it more natural:

A: Tsumaranai mono desu ga, doozo

(Please accept this trivial present.)

B: Watashi ni

(For me. .)

A: Doozo

(Please take it.)

B: Hontoo ni itadaite i desu ka

(Is it really all right to receive it.)

A: Kimochi dake desu kara

(It is just a thought)

B: Itsumo itadaite iru bakari desu

(I am always receiving from you.)

A: Iie, Kochira koso

(No, it is I. . .)

The second exchange is slightly exaggerated to make the point. However, it is a natural conversation that one might hear between native speakers of Japanese; and a language teacher would probably be quick to point out the abruptness of the first exchange.

The sense of reciprocity/indebtedness is seen in the different polite/ritual expressions that exist in the language:

Osewa sama deshita/Osewa ni narimashita

(You have taken good care of me./I am in your debt)

Senjitsu okokorotzukai o itadakimashita

(The other day I received a kindness from you.)

Konoaida wa iroiro arigatoo gozaimashita

(Thank you for everything the other day.)

These expressions may or may not be dealt with in a typical language classroom. They generally do not appear in novice level textbooks, although they have a high frequency in the speech of native speakers; and knowing when to use such expressions is an important speech strategy for individuals who will be interacting with native Japanese.

As mentioned above, vertical relationships (joogekankei), distance/reservation (enryo), indebtedness(On o ukeru/kaesu) are generally dealt with in the language classroom, to the extent that they affect language. However, more often than not, especially if the class is at an American university, the instructor will not deal with the factors as they affect behavior. A student who addresses instructor by first name, or who leaves a message such as," I have been trying to get in touch with you. Please call me at this number, or come to room 503 at 3:30 when my class is finished,", is not

conscious of a vertical relationship between him/herself and the instructor. The sense of reservation(enryo) may be discussed in a giving-and- receiving-of-food-or-gift situation in a language class. Although, the reservation exhibited by a Japanese person who would hesitate to do something in another person's domain without permission or invitation, e.g. use a telephone, help him/herself to food or drink, might not be. The typical American college student might be packing his/her books up five minutes before the end of class and be walking out the door as the bell rings; and the typical language instructor in an American setting generally does not protest although such behavior implies a lack of appreciation, respect and consideration for the teacher.

Finally, there are these values that almost completely govern behavior rather than language use: order/neatness(seiri seiton),Consideration/Anticipating the needs of others(ki ga kiku/ki ga tsuku). These values and the resulting actions are generally not dealt with in a typical novice language program. The Japanese value of orderliness/neatness (seiriseiton) can be seen in the way Japanese neatly fold wrapping paper and string after opening a gift or carefully rewrap a box lunch before it is discarded. It can also be seen explicitly in table manners: all the covers and dishes put back in their original positions at the end of a meal. I heard several years back that at the entrance exam for a prestigious kindergarten, each interviewee was told to walk across the room to the teacher, who was sitting at a desk. Between the teacher and the child, a jacket was left lying on the floor. Part of the test was to see whether the

child picked up the jacket or just stepped over it. The correct behavior was to pick up the jacket. This incident seems to underscore the importance placed on the concept of neatness/orderliness. A classroom with huge hunks of paper and gum wrappers strewn on the floor, and chairs left askew, does not reflect a valuing of neatness and order or consideration for others.

One can come up with countless examples of consideration for others or, in certain situations, using one's initiative(ki ga tsuku/ki ga kiku). Not-troubling-others (meiwaku o kakenai koto) can also be included here. If there is no chair at the teacher's desk, a chair should be provided. If one is requested to bring in a VCR or tape recorder to class,they should be plugged in and ready to go. The list goes on. If someone starts to light a cigarette, a considerate individual provides an ashtray without being asked. If you ask an American to lend you his/her pen, he/she will probably hand it to you as is; if you ask a Japanese for a pen, more likely than not, he/she will uncap it for you and give it to you ready to use.

Social intuition in the classroom

Recognizing the underlying values and expectations of the target culture is the first step toward sensitization. However, the real problem is finding a way to develop social intuition. Ideally, one learns a foreign language in-country; and social intuition develops through the process of assimilation. The learner observes how the natives speak and imitates accordingly. However, when learning a language outside the target culture, to develop social intuition

along with language skills, recreating the target culture's social context as accurately as possible in the classroom would seem to be the most viable option: that is, to set up, in advance, expectations and requirements that mirror those of the target culture, and to monitor, not only a students linguistic production, but also the appropriateness of student behavior in the context of the target culture. It is my contention that, an individual who has even partial control of the social intuition of a "second culture" will leave a more positive and lasting impression on the members of that society with whom he/she interacts. Thus, if the student's goal is to be able to successfully interact with native speakers in-country, as is the case of our interns, then development of social intuition becomes crucial.

In a typical Japanese language class here in the United States, language is taught in an American cultural context. The students treat their instructor as they would any other instructor or professor. More likely than not, there will be a sense of informality and familiarity which would not be acceptable in a Japanese cultural context. The students are expected to remember a set number of characters, be able to give verb inflections and fill in particles correctly. They are not exposed to nor expected to have control of the underlying attitudes, values and expectations that imbue appropriate behavior in a Japanese cultural context. In classes like ours, where the students will be expected to survive and interact with the natives in-country, the teacher/student relationship is looked upon as a model of all the vertical relationships the student will

encounter in-country; and the classroom becomes, not only the setting for academic study of the language, but a training ground for behavior as well.

Classroom rules provide a means to set up expectations appropriate to a Japanese cultural context. The development of behavioral expectaions begins with an orientation lecture outlining the goals and classroom rules. Ten years ago, there was no such list of rules and regulations. Each rule on our list reflects an actual violation by some student of some unspoken cultural rule and or expectation that offended an instructor. One of our native Japanese instructors complained about a student who came to class early and spread out all his books and papers on the table to study. She was irritated by the fact that, when she entered the room, he made no immediate move to clear away a space for her to put her materials, forcing her to clear his things to make a space for herself. This incident represents a violation of the values of consideration for others and respect for a superior. If it bothers an individual who received graduate training and has lived and worked in the U.S. for nearly 20 years, one can only imagine what the reaction would be in Japan.

Our students are told in their orientation that when they enter their Japanese language classroom, they must think of it as entering Japanese society in microcosm: when they cross the threshold into their classroom, they enter a vertical society, a world in which the instructor "sittith" at the right hand of GOD, having complete authority and expertise that is never questioned. Respect and humility is exhibited when dealing with superiors; and courtesy and

consideration is exhibited to peers. Our students are told in no uncertain terms,that, in their Japanese language classes, such behaviors as making demands, complaining, and monopolizing class time will trouble others and is inconsiderate and unacceptable behavior. This is the cultural context set up in advance for the development of social intuition and sensitivity.

All the students are given a list of classroom rules (See Appendix) which cover classroom maintenance, behavior, deportment and a dress code. At the novice level, and at upper levels, depending on the instructor, there is a daily monitor assigned. The monitor's job includes helping the teacher bring his/her materials back and forth to the classroom, leading the opening and closing rituals, bringing in audiovisual equipment, and erasing blackboards before and after class. In the opening ritual, the students are asked to rise and the monitor leads the class in a bow and greeting to the teacher; in the closing ritual, the monitor leads the class in a statement of appreciation to the teacher. The hope is that, as a result of these explicit rules and duties, the students will generalize and be able to intuit correct behavior in other parallel situations upon arrival in Japan.

In the future

The classroom rules, as they stand, represent a hodge podge and bandaid approach to the problem of cultural sensitivity and social intuition. They are better than nothing and represent a start. However, I would like to see a clearer definition of the attitudes and values of Japanese society and the behaviors that they dictate.

If possible I would like to see a description of the minimum level of social intuition necessary for success. At present, generalization beyond the classroom is left to each individual. Some are good at it; others are not. For this reason, I would also like to see development of activities that could be used in the classroom to practice and develop social intuition in a more explicit manner. Finally, I would like to see the development of an instrument to test for social intuition: say a battery of activities like the sweater lying across the students path.

Conclusion

If the study of Japanese is purely an academic exercise, if the student is never going to Japan and will never interact in any meaningful way with Japanese people, there is probably no need to demand the development of social intuition in the language classroom. At the same time, I do not believe that the goal should be to turn our students into Japanese clones, even if it were possible. There is a balance where each individual is able to preserve the charm of his native culture while adapting his/her behavior to the extent that it is acceptable in the target culture. In a program aimed at preparing student for in-country internships, such as ours, the importance of finding that balance and instilling social intuition in our students to the degree necessary becomes increasingly apparent. As a language professional, my goal has always been for my students to work toward near-native proficiency. However, I have come to the belief that this is only possible if the student also has a near-native level of social intuition. Language and culture are inseparable. Because

social intuition is to culture as linguistic intuition is to language, it is incumbent on us to work toward developing the two in tandem.

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Appendix

CLASSROOM RULES AND REGULATIONS

I. Mandatory Attendance

II. Classroom Maintenance

No food/drinks/smoking in classrooms

Erase chalkboards

Pick-up debris on floors/desks before/after class

See that the teacher has a chair at his/her desk

See that the teacher desk is clear

III. Classroom Behavior

No talking while the teacher is talking

Wait to be recognized before talking

Individual questions which will take time from class should be addressed to the teacher before/after class

Grammar points are not debatable

IV. Deportment

Four legs of chair on the floor at all times

Sit only on chairs (not tables)

Feet on the floor (never on tables)

Sit upright and erect in your seats

V. The teacher

To be addresed as Last Name + Sensei or Sensei

VI. Dress Code

Men: Long trousers, collared shirt, shoes and socks

Women: Office attire